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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Note verbale dated 8 March 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations (Vienna) addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations (Vienna) has the honour to inform the Secretary-General, in compliance with article 5 of the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (the "Rescue Agreement", General Assembly resolution 2345 (XXII)), that a piece of space debris was discovered on 12 January 2001 on the territory of Saudi Arabia, at a location about 240 kilometres (km) west of Riyadh, the Saudi Arabian capital, about 1 km from the highway linking the capital with the city of Taef.

The Permanent Mission wishes to report the following:

(a) The object is a metallic cylinder, 140 centimetres (cm) long, 120 cm in diameter and weighing about 70 kilograms. Technical examination carried out by the Space Research Institute at King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology using space debris monitoring programmes suggested that the object was the titanium cover of a solid-fuel motor used on board a GPS2 satellite, launched in 1993, which had been expected to fall in northern Brazil. Thiokol, the American manufacturer of this type of motor, was contacted and provided with the serial number on the object. Thiokol confirmed that the debris was in fact the cover of a Star 48-type motor used on board a GPS2 satellite launched in 1993;

(b) The Government of Saudi Arabia will notify the Government of the United States of America in this regard, in compliance with article 5, paragraph 1, of the Rescue Agreement.

The Permanent Mission requests that the present note verbale be circulated as an official document of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

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